

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

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## Anzac Day

THE fact that Anzac Day fell this year on a Sunday made it easier to maintain the distinction between a holy day and a holiday. But it did not make it easier to adjust the hopes of 30 years ago to the gloomy realities of the present day. If Anzac Day were not primarily a day of dedication it would in fact be impossible to observe it any longer. But it is dedication before anything else, and if we do not go on devoting it to that purpose year after year it becomes just a mockery and a sham. Those who wished to drop it from the calendar in 1939 would have been right if the day had ever been a celebration of conquest or military victory. But Gallipoli was a military defeat. The only conquest achieved there was moral; the only victory, triumph over weakness and fear. In a military sense those who died on the peninsula died to no purpose; those who survived came away frustrated and humble. They had lost their battle, their equipment, their ground; everything but their cohesion and courage. We might as well celebrate the battle of Hastings as the struggle on Gallipoli if we were seeking to make a military triumph of it. But Anzac Day has nothing to do with military glory. It is a day added to our calendar in memory of a bitter struggle in which thousands of our kinsmen won enduring moral glory. Because it is that and nothing else it is proper to keep the day holy. But it will never be proper to keep it in any other way—to make any kind of V-day of it or an occasion for boasting and swagger.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 7

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

## FREE THINKING

Sir,—Referring to your editorial of April 16 it is open to question whether the young person entering a university is, in the strictest sense, capable of free thinking, because the mind by that time has already been conditioned by preliminary primary and secondary instruction. J. S. Mill said: "A general State education is a contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another . . . it establishes a despotism over the mind." In 1944, Carl L. Becker, a distinguished American, said: "Most men have believed that the danger inherent in learning could best be met by schools under proper control teaching the right things—the ideas and beliefs, whether true or not, that would tend to confirm rather than to undermine the established social system." Minds so dealt with are already somewhat shackled when adolescence is reached, and it seems as if the effort to secure real free thinking must begin before the university.

What universities, and I hope the rest of us, want is to preserve freedom of expression of thought. We are all free to think what we like and no harm done so long as we do not utter it. But throughout the world to-day there seems to be a tendency to adopt the Japanese idea of persecution of "dangerous thoughts." Liberty, political liberty—what the experts call juridical defence—is summed up in the right of expressing one's thoughts freely in speech and print and organising to give effect to those thoughts. The United Nations, with its proposals for restricting the Press in regard to publication of war propaganda, seems to me to be lending itself to nibbling threateningly at this fundamental freedom.

In the last analysis the current social and political ideas rest upon a basis of force capable of imposing them if need be. But in my judgment we shall get nearest to maximum freedom if we can hit upon a system permitting the greatest freedom of expression of thought, checked by something to prevent the imposition of views by physical or economic force. History, I think, shows that hitherto the greatest freedom has come from the conflict of a number of religious, political and social ideas, for which pre-eminence has been sought. That struggle will continue to produce most freedom if it can be carried on under conditions whereby no one set of ideas can be imposed by force and the bloodstained record of the past will be supplanted by the bloodless conquest of the mind. It should not be beyond us to devise a system which provides a kind of balance between the contending forces and ensures that no one can overpower all the rest.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

## SHORT STORIES

Sir,—Leo Waters asks why I imagine he writes. Surely, from his letter to make money. Vergil reports that the track to Hades is greasy, and consequently, in making a priority of the profit motive, there is danger of a permanent lowering of the aim from the masterpiece to the pot-boiler, and this puts the writer outside the orbit of my appeal for more and better short stories. As regards competition from women's

magazines, there is no such thing as a new plot anyhow. The best you can do is a new angle on an old one, and it is up to you whether you achieve "sentimental slush" or something else.

Criticising an admittedly clever story a leading magazine editor wrote thus: "This story has several failings; it is written in a rather dreary style and deals with unpleasant people and it has a tragic ending; and as I have pointed out with great respect, it is almost impossible to get people to pay a shilling for this kind of thing, as they have enough misery in their own lives without buying more." This puts in a nutshell the whole law and the "profits" for the magazine short story.

I am told that my call on the domain of the diaper for a spot of make-believe was a futile gesture, as nowadays, all up to the minute babes scoff at the story of Santa. O. Henry is the ideal exponent of this art. He does not need Zola's dead dogs and decaying vegetables, the sadistic humour of the Grimm Bros., or the cruelty of the Russians. He gets closer to the heart of things than any of these. With supreme wizardry he provokes us to laughter or tears, sometimes to both at the same time. His humour is deeper and more lasting than the comic wit that gets a loud guffaw, and his sense of the tears in things, like minor music, invades the spirit with a gentle sadness and he makes us like it. Professor Leacock thinks that the Latin America of O. Henry is most likely as gloriously unreal as the London of Charles Dickens, the Salem of Nathaniel Hawthorne, or any other beautiful picture of the higher truth of life than can be shattered into splinters in the distorting of cold fact.

E. A. W. SMITH (Christchurch).

## "THE HAUNTED INN"

Sir,—I would like to protest against BBC transcriptions such as the above being broadcast over our National stations. I listened to the above production from 3YA last Monday evening more out of curiosity than anything else just to see what type of play it would be. I was disgusted to think that this is the sort of thing now thought suitable for New Zealand listeners. There is nothing edifying in these portrayals of brutal murders such as occurred in this latest BBC production and it is time we banned them from our programmes.

"LISTENER" (Dunedin).

## DOMBEY AND SON

Sir,—I hope the Director of Broadcasting will give YA listeners further serials of the calibre of *Dombey and Son*. Not only did the performers enter into the very spirit of Dickens's story, but they did their parts so well that even those who had not read the book must have thoroughly enjoyed its presentation. I did, and this is a note of thanks and request for more.

H. E. COMBS (Wellington).

## SYMBIOSIS

Sir,—"Augustus" censures Z. Burglestein for remodelling a tune into a rhumba, thus (as "Augustus" says) keeping Chopin alive—and Burglestein, too. I agree that Z. Burglestein

deserves censure. So, too, do arrangers like Stokowski, or Dr. T. Vernon Griffiths, or Andersen Tyner, who by keeping, say, Bach, or Handel, or Tchaikovsky alive, keep themselves alive, too.

JOSEPH C. McEVOY (Dunedin).

## PLANS FOR HAMILTON

Sir,—In September last mention was made through your columns of the future plans for new stations. Hamilton was referred to as being the site for a 2k.w. station. Can any indication be given as to when work will commence? The Waikato district has been without a local station since 1ZH closed down in 1936.

R. W. ALDRIDGE (Hamilton).

(We are informed that the plans and specifications are now being prepared for the temporary studios necessary. The studios will be situated in the basement of the Hamilton City Council's offices in Alma Street, and should be completed at an early date, if no unforeseen difficulties arise. The negotiations for the purchase of a suitable transmitter site have also reached an advanced stage.—Ed.)

## "QUIRES AND PLACES"

Sir,—Just a note to say how pleased I am to have "In Quires and Places Where They Sing" back on the programme. This is a most enjoyable 15 minutes; I have listened to it from the beginning, and I hope it has no ending. I was going to write and ask if we could have the "Gospel Singer" put elsewhere. Now I will just say thank you for "In Quires and Places," and hope it will long continue.

"QUIRE" (Kilbirnie).

## NEW ZEALAND COMPLACENCY

Sir,—I was extremely pleased to read C.S.E.'s letter in a recent issue on "Let's Have It Out!"—I, too, was most agreeably impressed with the reasoned moderation and ability with which Mrs. McPhail put forward her views, in marked contrast to her opponents, one of whom at least was concerned with one thing and one thing only—to demonstrate that New Zealand and New Zealanders must be above criticism! When will New Zealanders discard this childish attitude and stand up to criticism? The same thing occurred in the case of the much less restrained comments of the Rev. R. Clough, which unleashed a flood of shrill expostulation: no one paused for a moment to consider whether any of them might be true.

"ANOTHER LISTENER" (Wellington).

## A LISTENER'S QUESTIONS

Sir,—Was Cleopatra fair-skinned? G. B. Shaw's film version portrayed her as quite white. And are the Cingalese "very arrogant like we are" (as I heard to-day in a broadcast to schools on Ceylon)? Don't magazines and films give their chief characteristic as "dignified"—or is that the Siamese?

"NOSEY PARKER" (Nelson).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. I. (Feilding): Interesting, but hardly *The Listener's* concern.

"Non-Wowser" (Tolaga Bay): Starters and riders are given before each race begins.

An Interested Listener: Thank you for the suggestion and for your kind remarks. The suggestion is being passed on to officers responsible.

P. W. Smith (Waikouaiti) and others: All enquiries received about the article, "Cheaper Houses that Last Longer," will be passed on by this office to R. Ammer.